

CITY OF FRIDLEY
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING – OCTOBER 3, 2016

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson Heintz called the October 3, 2016 Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Fridley Municipal Center – Meeting Room 1.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Mike Heintz, Michele Barrett, Shanna Larson and Greg Ackerman

Others Present: Jack Kirk, Director of Parks and Recreation
Bryan Harjes, Hoesington Koegler Group, Inc.
Sarah Evenson, Hoesington Koegler Group, Inc.

APPROVAL OF September 12, 2016 PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

MOTION by Mr. Ackerman, seconded by Ms. Barrett, to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2016 meeting.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL MEMBERS VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON HEINTZ DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 3, 2016

MOTION by Mr. Ackerman, seconded by Ms. Larson, to approve the agenda for the October 3, 2016 meeting.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL MEMBERS VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON HEINTZ DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

1. STAFF REPORT

a. Program Update

Mr. Kirk stated that the Program Update is included in the agenda packet for the information of the Commission members. It tells about some of the programs and activities of the Department over the past month.

b. Park Maintenance Report

Mr. Kirk stated that a Park Maintenance report has been written by Operations Manager of Streets and Parks Jeff Jensen. It is included in the agenda packet to provide info on park maintenance work over the past month.

Mr. Kirk stated that the heavy rains in September have kept the park workers very busy with mowing of the turf areas. The park workers have also started to install the new playground equipment at Commons Park. The play area should be open for use in early October.

c. Springbrook Nature Center Report

Mr. Kirk stated that this report has been submitted by Mike Maher, Springbrook Nature Center Director. It provides information on Springbrook Nature Center for the past month. It should be noted that the bid documents for the Phase 2 amphitheater and Children's Play area have been released. Sealed bids are due this Friday.

d. Pumpkin Night in the Park

Mr. Kirk stated that Pumpkin Night in the Park is Saturday, October 22 at Springbrook Nature Center. This is a very popular special event and normally draws a large crowd. The Commission members are certainly invited to attend.

e. West Moore Lake Improvement Project

Mr. Kirk stated that a trail project is being planned for a loop around Moore Lake, including a section that will run on the west boundary of the sand dunes park. A public workshop has been set for October 25th and a representative from the Engineering Department will be at the November Commission meeting to discuss the project in greater detail.

2. NEW BUSINESS

a. Moore Lake Park Planning – Hoesington Koegler Group, Inc.

Mr. Kirk stated that City staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission have discussed the need for some future planning for Moore Lake Park. We have Bryan Harjes and Sarah Evenson from Hoesington Koegler Group, Inc. at the meeting tonight to help with starting that process. Moore Lake Park is one of our most heavily used parks, especially in the summer months. Aging facilities and changes in park usage makes planning for the future very important.

Mr. Kirk stated that HKGi has developed a short user survey regarding Moore Lake Park that is on the City's website to gain public input into this planning process. It would be appreciated if the Parks and Recreation Commission members would take the time to complete the survey.

Mr. Harjes stated that they would like to hear from the Commission members on what is working well at Moore Lake, what needs improvement and what is the vision for this park for the next twenty or so years. It is really game planning for future improvements. Part of this process is to articulate the bigger picture vision, develop a cost estimate, and come up with a phasing plan on how this plan could be completed over a period of time.

Mr. Harjes stated that they had already met with a representative of the watershed district and the watershed district is anxious to complete a project that would help to improve Moore Lake. Tying together park improvements with watershed improvement projects may be a route to be explored.

Mr. Harjes shared an overview of the planning process, including getting back to the Commission in November and having a plan completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Harjes stated that the size of the beach has been a topic raised in several discussions. Most input points to the beach being larger today than it needs to be for serving the swimmers. Another area to explore is whether the picnic shelters are large enough to accommodate some of the larger groups that seem to utilize Moore Lake Park for gatherings.

Mr. Harjes stated that older area photos show a significant amount of potential wetland area in the Moore Lake Park. City Engineer Jim Kosluchar is going to have a wetland delineation taken so we know exactly what we are dealing with as future plans are made.

Mr. Harjes stated that the park is uniquely situated in the community as a regional type amenity. The park sits between the schools, it has Highway 65 running through the middle of the lake, and it has the Sand Dunes area on the western side of the lake. He understands that there is a grant to the City of Fridley to provide for a loop trail system all around Moore Lake. This will add a lot to bike and pedestrian access to Moore Lake Park. The monument area on the south of the park can be a gateway entrance area to the City as people travel north on Highway 65. This can start to showcase Fridley.

Mr. Ackerman asked if the City had purchased some land north of Moore Lake Park that could be incorporated into these redesign plans.

Mr. Kirk stated there are seven parcels north of the Moore Lake Park and the City does own four of them. The three that remain are the most expensive properties and have residential homes on them. The closest property to the park is owned by the City and could easily be used for park purposes.

Mr. Kirk further stated that, years ago, the City had a plan to buy all of the properties as they became available by willing sellers. Given the limited dollars available in the parks CIP fund, it would be difficult for the City to afford those properties and to continue to support needed improvements in the park system.

Mr. Heintz stated that he has asked this before, but why don't we consider selling some of the properties north of the park area and use the money to improve Moore Lake Park.

Mr. Kirk stated that this could certainly be something that the Commission could discuss with the City Council. He further stated that it would likely take some grant money or some other source of outside funds for the City to be able to purchase the remaining properties for a park expansion.

Ms. Evenson stated that the intersection of Gardena Avenue unto Old Central has been brought up as a potential for concern with any redesign of the park and parking lot adjacent to the beach. It can be difficult for park users to get in and out of the lot at certain times of the day.

Ms. Evenson stated that one of the things they are seeing in parkland redevelopment is converting turf areas into natural plantings, especially in areas that stay wet for much of the year. There are some wet areas at Moore Lake Park that could be candidates for such a conversion.

Ms. Evenson stated that some of the initial discussions on the park redesign have indicated that the current beach area may be oversized. Some of the area could have other uses such as paddleboards, canoes, and kayaks. Another idea for the park may be a circuit fitness trail with exercise stations.

Mr. Ackerman asked if the final plan for the park will be in the form of a five year plan, so that improvements can be made over time with limited funds. Some of the ideas being proposed could be costly and may have to wait until the funds are available.

Mr. Harjes stated that the Commission should think about what they really want to see at this park. He further stated that is likely that the park improvements would have to be implemented over a period of time.

Ms. Evenson stated that another idea that is gaining popularity in parks is a concept called imagination playgrounds.

Mr. Heintz stated that a splash pad is likely an amenity that would be popular at this park.

Mr. Harjes agreed and stated that it would be a good fit for a park that has family get-togethers such as Moore Lake.

Ms. Evenson stated that she understands the picnic pavilions are heavily used at this park and wanted the Commission to consider whether they are the right size. Would it make sense to have one or two larger pavilions to accommodate some larger groups wanting to use the park?

Ms. Evenson stated that flexible open space areas are nice for gathering type events. Having space around the pavilions allows for people to adjust tables and seating for the activity they are attending.

Ms. Evenson also explained that there are options to deal with the areas that remain wet much of the year. She stated that further discussions with the watershed district on potential projects will be required.

Mr. Harjes talked about an iron enhanced sand filter for phosphorous reduction, which is something the watershed district is interested in for Moore Lake to help with water quality. He wanted the Commission members to at least be familiar with this possible type of project, as it may come up in further discussion of park redevelopment plans. Some interpretive signage may also be incorporated into a project of this type to educate people as to how this is helping improve the lake.

Ms. Evenson stated another potential option for treating water flowing into the lake might be a hydrodynamic separator, which is a stormwater management device that helps reduce sediment and pollutants. It would be in the area of the catch basin and would capture the water entering the park, but before getting to the lake. It would not take up extra space in the park, so it may be an option to consider.

Ms. Larson asked if the Park Maintenance personnel were going to have input into the park design.

Mr. Harjes stated that we have a meeting with the Park Maintenance staff already scheduled for next week. We will look at what they are seeing as needs for the park and what are some of the park issues related to maintaining the facility.

Mr. Harjes stated that in the next couple of weeks, they would be collecting information through the on-line questionnaire. He would like the Commission members to complete the survey if possible. In mid-October, they will have a workshop with staff to develop some park concepts. They would like to come back to the Parks and Recreation Commission on November 7th with a preferred plan for discussion and discuss options for the park. They will work through all the information in November and provide a final plan in December.

Mr. Harjes stated that he would like to hear the Commission member's thoughts on the project or things to focus on.

Mr. Ackerman stated that from what he has seen and heard, and from his perspective, that a smaller beach area really makes sense. This has always been a multi-function park and he would like to see it remain as such. He would like to see some attention paid to improving the shelters, maybe even adding a larger one. He would favor getting rid of the ballfield infield area and make a more open play area that could easily accommodate multiple sport options. He would favor keeping a basketball court, but removing the tennis courts may make sense.

Mr. Heintz stated that he likes the idea of the park focusing on families and group gatherings. He liked the concept of a splash pad area, somewhat adjacent to the swimming beach.

Mr. Heintz suggested that the sand volleyball area could be moved to the beach area and that would open up an area for another park amenity.

Ms. Larson suggested a new picnic shelter could be placed where the existing softball field is located, where it would be close to parking and access for people.

Mr. Ackerman expressed a concern for any activity involving children that would be too close to Central Avenue, which he sees as a heavily travelled road.

Ms. Barrett asked if some of the parking in the south lot would have to come out to accommodate a new water management feature.

Mr. Harjes stated that was a possibility.

Ms. Barrett stated that if we add other amenities to attract people to the park, we need to make sure we still provide adequate parking.

Mr. Harjes stated that it may take re-allocating some of the existing program spaces to accommodate new features, so we still can provide the necessary parking.

Mr. Harjes thanked the Commission for their input and said they would be working on these ideas over the next month. They will be back at the next Commission meeting to discuss the concepts being looked at.

b.. Skating Rink Locations 2016-2017

Mr. Kirk stated that staff is providing a recommendation for the skating and hockey rink locations for the coming skating season. Under this recommendation, the City would have one warming house located at Commons Park. The hockey rink locations would be two at Commons Park and one at each of the following locations: Hayes Elementary School, Madsen Park, Flanery Park and Ruth Circle Park.

Mr. Kirk further stated that the recommendation for general skating rinks would be Briardale Park, Commons Park (the Middle School track oval), Flanery Park, Hackmann Park, Hayes Elementary School, Logan Park, Madsen Park, Plymouth Square Park, Ruth Circle Park, Springbrook Park and Sylvan Hills Park.

Mr. Kirk stated that this is nearly the same as last year, with the addition of Plymouth Square Park in place of Summit Square Park. Summit Square Park has been the site of a street construction project and a water holding system under the formerly used skating area which will prevent a rink being placed there.

MOTION by Ms. Larson, seconded by Ms. Barrett, to approve the staff recommended staff recommended skating and hockey rink locations for the 2016-2017 season.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL MEMBERS VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON HIENTZ DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

c. Springbrook Use Policy Addition

Mr. Kirk stated that a use policy for Springbrook Nature Center was approved at the September meeting, but it had one omission that staff would like to see added to the rental rate schedule. The rental schedule for a single classroom use should have been included and staff would recommend the hourly rate of \$25 for a Fridley based non-profit group. The rest of the rental schedule would be left as approved last month.

MOTION by Mr. Ackerman, seconded by Ms. Larson, to approve the rental rate for a classroom at Springbrook Nature Center at \$25 per hour for a Fridley based non-profit group.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL MEMBERS VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON HIENTZ DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Barrett, seconded by Ms. Larson to adjourn the October 3, 2016 meeting at 8:30 p.m.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL MEMBERS VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON HEINTZ DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED AND THE OCTOBER 3, 2016 MEETING ADJOURNED.